



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESEAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN October 15th, 2023

V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL



Icon of Parable of the Sower and Seed

Prokeimenon. Mode 4

Daniel 3.26,27

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

Verse: For you are just in all you have done.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful. All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ'

Δανιήλ 3.26-27

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν.

Στίχ. Ὅτι δίκαιος εἶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, οἷς ἐποίησας ἡμῖν.

Πρὸς Τίτον 3:8-15 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Τέκνον Τίτε, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιουῖσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῷ. ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις · μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔριν καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιῖστασο, εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι. αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἀμαρτάνει, ὣν αὐτοκατάκριτος. Ὅταν πέμπω Ἀρτεμᾶν πρὸς σέ ἢ Τυχικόν, σπουδάσον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ κέκρικα παραχειμάσαι. Ζηνᾶν τὸν νομικὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν σπουδαίως πρόπεμψον, ἵνα μηδὲν αὐτοῖς λείπῃ. μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρείας, ἵνα μὴ ὦσιν ἄκαρποι. Ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες. Ἀσπασαί τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει. ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

The Lord said this parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold." And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." As he said these things, he cried out "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην· Ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων τοῦ σπείραι τὸν σπόρον αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐν τῷ σπείρειν αὐτὸν ὁ μὲν ἔπεσε παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, καὶ κατεπατήθη, καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατέφαγεν αὐτό· καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν, καὶ φυὲν ἐξηράνθη διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἱκμάδα· καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀκανθῶν, καὶ συμφυεῖσαι αὐτὸ ἀκάνθαι ἀπέπνιξαν αὐτό. καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν ἀγαθὴν, καὶ φυὲν ἐποίησε καρπὸν κατονταπλασίονα. ταῦτα λέγων ἐφώνει· ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω. Ἐπρωτῶν δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· τίς εἴη ἡ παραβολὴ αὕτη; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς, ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσι καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιῶσιν. ἔστι δὲ αὕτη ἡ παραβολή· ὁ σπόρος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ· οἱ δὲ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εἰσιν οἱ ἀκούσαντες, εἶτα ἔρχεται ὁ διάβολος καὶ αἶρει τὸν λόγον ἀπὸ τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν. οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας οἱ ὅταν ἀκούσωσι, μετὰ χαρᾶς δέχονται τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὗτοι ῥίζαν οὐκ ἔχουσιν, οἱ πρὸς καιρὸν πιστεύουσι καὶ ἐν καιρῷ πειρασμοῦ ἀφίστανται. τὸ δὲ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας πεσόν, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀκούσαντες, καὶ ὑπὸ μεριμνῶν καὶ πλούτου καὶ ἡδονῶν τοῦ βίου πορευόμενοι συμπνίγονται καὶ οὐ τελεσφοροῦσι. τὸ δὲ ἐν τῇ καλῇ γῇ, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἵτινες ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον κατέχουσι καὶ καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν ὑπομονῇ. ταῦτα λέγων ἐφώνει· ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω.



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT

FELLOWSHIP COFFEE HOURS is being hosted by the Plessias Family in loving memory of +ANDREA PLESSIAS spouse of Demetrios Plessias. Please join us in WHITEHALL for refreshments.

PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES SOCIETY will take their OATH of OFFICE TODAY. All executives and Board Members are urged to be present for the Divine Liturgy and ceremony at 10:30 A.M. A MEMBERSHIP GENERAL MEETING WILL BE CONVENED the following 22nd of October at 12:30 p.m. in WhiteHall after the Sunday Liturgy.

Prayer and Healing Service offered on the CENTRAL WEDNESDAY, of each month is scheduled for THIS Wednesday OCTOBER 18TH, starting at 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. scriptural reading and exegesis, homily, reflections and witnessing, prayer, conclude with the sacred anointing of Holy Euchelaion. Refreshments follow. Everyone is welcomed. Give it a try.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE of the CENTERFOLD PROGRAM for this Friday evening VIGIL until Saturday Noon. Make your pilgrimage and venerate the sacred icon.

UP COMING FEAST DAY: The Great Martyr SAINT DEMETRIOS will be honored with Divine Liturgy on THURSDAY – October 26th, at 10:00 A.M. Artoklasies are most welcomed. Ypsomata will be distributed.

CUB SCOUT PROGRAMMING: Our young CUB SCOUT PACK returns today (SUNDAY) after a 3 day camping experience at ALPINE CAMP – NEW JERSEY. Here the youngsters commune with GOD, nature and their inner strengths. Is your lad a scout?

HALLOWEEN PARTY is scheduled for the Cub Scouts on Friday evening, October 27th, at 7:00 P.M. Scouting members and families are cordially invited to share in the fun, tricks or treats And an occasional Booooo!

DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE: Grand celebration and anniversary of FOUNDERS DAY is scheduled for the ROSEHALL on Sunday, October 29th, 2023 at 12 NOON. Please support our Demetra Chapter on this 30th, Jubilee Event. Check the insert flyer for all the details. SEE YOU THERE?

Archbishop Elpidophoros' Patronal Name-day Dinner is announced for SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH. In New York City. Further details will follow shortly.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW: on the evening of Friday, October 20th, through the all night vigil to Saturday, October 21st the Oil Streaming Tearful ICON of PANAGIA KARDIOTISSA will arrive at Three Hierarch Church. Her last appearance was over six years ago during the Lenten observance of the Holy Salutations to the Theotokos. Thousands of faithful from various churches creeds, races and ethnic groupings flooded the church all night long for and anointing and veneration of the miraculous healing presence of the Virgin Mother of God. Many clergymen heard confessions all through the night in preparation for the morning Divine Liturgy and reception of the EUCHARIST. This wonder working healing icon comes to us from Taylor, Pennsylvania where it is continually visible for reverence and prayer. NOW, she comes to US: WE ARE INDEED GRATEFUL!

CONGRATULATIONS are extended to the NEW CUB SCOUT TROOP (CUB-MASTER) Mr, Andreas Papamanousakis. He is a stellar son of the Parish, married with two children. Sign up your young lads (sons and grand-sons) and join the CUB SCOUT 'PACK'..... IT'S A GROWING TOOL!

MEMORIAL TODAY: + ANDREA PLESSIAS +TOM PAPPAS
MEMORIAL NEXT SUNDAY: + SYLVIA and GUS VELLIOS
+ Deceased members of the DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE
DEMETRA CHAPTER #33

Eternal be the memory of the faithfully departed!



The Miraculous Myrrh-Streaming Icon

Panagia Kardiotissa

“The Tender Heart”

*of St. George Orthodox Church, Taylor, PA,
will be brought for veneration to*

**Three Hierarchs Greek
Orthodox Church**

1724 Avenue P -Brooklyn, NY

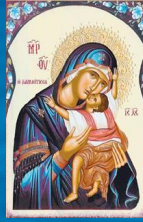
Friday, October 20, 2023

- 6pm Arrival of the Icon
- 6:15pm Trilingual Molieben to the Mother of God,
officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Antony
of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of USA
- 6:45pm Talk about the Kardiotissa Icon with Very Reverend Father Mark Leasure,
Custodian of the Icon; Pastor of St. George Orthodox Church, Taylor, PA
- 8:00pm Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God in Greek
- 10:00pm Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God in Ukrainian

Saturday, October 21, 2023

- 12:00am Molieben to the Mother of God in Ukrainian
- 9:30am Trilingual Divine Liturgy
- 11:00am Trilingual Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God

THE HOLY ICON WILL REMAIN IN CHURCH ALL NIGHT FOR VISITATION AND ANOINTINGS!



The Holy Monastery of Keras Kardiotissa is one of the most important monasteries in Crete. It is 50 kilometers southeast of Heraklion, Crete, next to Ayios Thomas Village. It was built in the 10th century, as the property of the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople, on the ruins of an older monastery of the 7th century AD. Due to its fortified position, during the Cretan revolutions.

It was the revolutionary center of the Eastern Plain and suffered many times the reprisals of the Turks. In 1720, Kera monastery became Stavropegic (directly under the Ecumenical Patriarchate). In 1822 and 1842, the Turks destroyed the monastery, which was restored both times. In 1866-1867, the monastery became a strong hold of Cretan rebels as well as a target of the Turks. During the German occupation, this monastery was a shelter for people who arrived there to be saved, including an architect named Mastrogiannis, who built the bell tower of the monastery as a gift, out of gratitude. The monastery was used by the Greek liberation army.

The Landscape all around the monastery is lush green and the famous river Axedianos flows next to it and most famous are its abundance of peacocks. There are also numerous benches, where visitors can rest under the 'driyia' (Oak tree in the Cretan dialect) which is 600 years old. today it is a convent and celebrates its festal day on September 8th-the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.

It is believed that the establishment of the monastery is connected with the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary created by Saint Lazarus and monk and icon writer of the 9th century. It is an icon of vrefokratoussa (Infant Holder), holding Jesus in her arms, on the side of her heart - that's why it was called Kardiotissa (from the Greek word kardia, meaning heart).

In 1498, during the Venian rule the icon was stolen by a wine merchant and taken to Rome to the Church of Agios Alphonsus, near the Esquiline hill, where it remains today. In 1735, it was replaced by another icon, which is considered equally miraculous and called "Kyria Kardiotissa" (LADY OF THE HEART). The icon was stolen three times by the Turks and was sent to Constantinople, but miraculously returned back. The third time, to avoid losing the icon again, they tied it to a marble column with a thick chain. Today both the column and the chain are in the monastery. One of these times, as the icon was reaching the monastery, coming back from Constantinople, it touched a high steep rock and left its "mark" that can still be seen today. Nowadays, this spot is called "Impression".



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«Ἐγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ὅπως μου μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος» (Ἀπ. 1,10)

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακή Γυναικεία Τετρὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-29610 - imaaflo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΚΓ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1291*

Κυριακὴ Δ' Λουκᾶ (Λουκ. 8,4-15)
15 Ὀκτωβρίου 2023 (2006)

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Ὁ λόγος εἶνε σπόρος

«Ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπεῖρων τοῦ σπεῖραι τὸν σπόρον αὐτοῦ» (Λουκ. 8,5)

Σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἡ ἀγία μας Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἐορτάζει καὶ πανηγυρίζει τὴ μνήμη τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ποὺ συγκρότησαν στὴ Νίκαια τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας τὴν ἑβδόμη Οἰκουμένην Σύνοδο τὸ 787 μ.Χ.. Τότε θεσπίστηκε ἡ προσκύνῃσι τῶν εἰκόνων, ποὺ εἶνε ἀρρήκτως συνδεδεμένη μὲ τὸ δόγμα τῆς σαρκώσεως τοῦ Λόγου. Οἱ 365 αὐτοὶ πατέρες συνῆλθαν ἐκ περάτων τῆς γῆς, ἀποφάνθησαν ὅτι ὁποῖος δὲν προσκυνᾷ τὴς εἰκόνες καὶ τὸ σταυρὸ εἶνε αἰρετικός, καὶ ἀναστήλωσαν τὴς εἰκόνες.

Εἰς μνήμην τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τελεῖται σήμερα ἡ θεία λειτουργία. Ἀλλὰ ἡ θεία λειτουργία δὲν εἶνε μόνο θυσία· εἶνε καὶ διδασκαλία. Κατ' αὐτὴν ἀκούμε τὴν προτροπὴ «**Λάβετε φάγετε...**» *πίστε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες*» (Ματθ. 26,27), ἀλλὰ προηγουμένως ἀκούμε· «Ὁρθοὶ ἀκούσωμεν τοῦ ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου» (βλ. πρ.). Διότι ὁ Χριστὸς εἶνε ὄχι μόνο ὁ μέγας ἀρχιερεὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ῥαββί, ὁ διδάσκαλος. **Ὁ Χριστὸς διδάξε.** Δίδξαν βέβαια καὶ ἄλλοι διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων, διδάσκουν, καὶ θὰ διδάσκουν. Ἀλλὰ ὁ Χριστὸς δὲν διδάξε ὅπως ὁ Σωκράτης καὶ ὁ Πλάτων κι ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ ὁ Κικέρων, οὔτε «ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς» τῶν Ἰουδαίων (Ματθ. 23,2)· διδάξε ὡς **αὐθεντία**. Δίδαξε ἀπλᾶ, πολὺ ἀπλᾶ, μὲ εἰκόνες ἀπὸ τὸ φυσικὸ κόσμον καὶ παραδείγματα ἀπὸ τὴ ζωὴ τῶν ταπεινῶν γεωργῶν καὶ ποιμένων. Ἡ διδασκαλία του ὅσο εἶνε ἀπλὴ τόσο εἶνε καὶ βαθειὰ καὶ ὑψηλὴ καὶ πλατειά. **Εἶνε ὁ διδάσκαλος** ἐν ἀπολύτῳ ἐννοίᾳ, ὁ μόνος διδάσκαλος, τὸν ὁποῖο πρέπει ν' ἀκούμε.

Εὐτυχεῖς ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ἀκούνε τὸ λόγο του καὶ διαβάζουν τὸ Εὐαγγελίον του· δυστυχεῖς ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ δὲν τὸ διαβάζουν, καὶ ἀκόμη δυστυχέστεροι ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ἐνῶ τὸ ἀκούνε δὲν τὸ ἐφαρμόζουν. Ὁ λόρδος Βύρων εἶχε πεῖ· ἄνθρωπος πού, ἐνῶ διαβάζει τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον, δὲν τὸ ἐφαρμόζει, προτιμότερο νὰ μὴ ἐγεννᾶτο.

Θέλετε, ἀγαπητοί μου, νὰ θαυμάσετε τὴ διδασκαλία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ν' ἀπολαύσετε τὸ ὕψος τῆς; Ἀνοῖξετε σήμερα τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν Εὐαγγέλιον, διαβάστε τὸ 8ο κεφάλαιον, καὶ ἐντρυφήστε στὴν ὠραία παραβολὴ ποὺ ἀκούσαμε πρὸ ὀλίγου. Εἶνε ἡ **παραβολὴ τοῦ σπορέως**. Πόσο ἀπλὴ εἶναι! Τί λέει ἐκεῖ ὁ Κύριος;

Βγῆκε ὁ γεωργὸς μὲ τὸ δισάκκι γεμᾶτο **σπόρον** καὶ πῆγε στὸ χωράφι του. Ἐσπείρε δεξιὰ - ἀριστερά, πάνω - κάτω· δὲν ἄφησε γωνιά ἄσπαρτη. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα· ἐνῶ ὁ σπόρος ἦταν ἐκλεκτός, ἀπὸ τὰ τέσσερα μέρη τοῦ σπόρου ἕνα μόνο ρίζωσε βλάστησε ὠρίμασε καὶ καρποφόρησε, τὰ ἄλλα ἔμειναν ἄκαρπα.

Ἡ παραβολὴ αὕτη εἶνε **ἀνεξάντλητη σὲ διδάγματα**· ὄχι μόνο πνευματικά, πρακτικά καὶ κοινωνικά, ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλοσοφικά - παιδαγωγικά. Δύο νεαροὶ δάσκαλοι τῆς περιφέρειᾶς Κοζᾶνης ἔβγαλαν ἕνα μικρὸ βιβλίον, στὸ ὁποῖο ἐξετάζουν τὴν παραβολὴ ἀπὸ πλευρᾶς παιδαγωγικῆς καὶ ἀναλύουν τοὺς τύπους ποὺ περιέχει.

Ἐγὼ θὰ ἐπιστήσω τὴν προσοχή σας στὴν ἀρχὴ τῆς παραβολῆς, ποὺ λέει ὅτι ὁ Κύριος «**ἐξῆλθεν**» ὡς γεωργὸς νὰ σπεῖρῃ «**τὸν σπόρον αὐτοῦ**» (Ματθ. 13). Ὅμιλεῖ περὶ **σπόρου**.

Ποιὸς δὲν εἶδε σπόρον; Τί εἶνε σπόρος; Ὑπάρχει σπόρος φυσικὸς καὶ σπόρος ὑπερφυσικὸς. ● **Ὁ φυσικὸς σπόρος** εἶνε γνωστός. Ὑπάρχουν σπόροι πολὺ μικροί, σὰν τὸ κεφάλι μιᾶς καρφίτσας. Κι ὁμως μέσα στὸ μικρὸ ἐκεῖνον σπόρον ὑπάρχει ὁλόκληρο ἐργοστάσιον καὶ χημεῖο. Ἀπὸ ἕνα μικρὸ σπόρον φυτρώνει στὴ γλάστρα σου ἕνα πολυχρῶμον ἄνθος ποὺ εὐωδιάζει. Ἀπὸ ἄλλους σπόρους βγαίνουν δέντρα μεγάλα εὐσκιόφυλλα καὶ καρποφόρα, βγαίνουν δάση ἀπέραντα. Μικρὸ εἶν' αὐτό; Ἕνας σπόρος εἶνε ἕνα θαῦμα. Ὅλοι οἱ γεωπόνοι καὶ ἄλλοι ἐπιστήμονες νὰ μαζευτοῦν, δὲν μποροῦν νὰ μᾶς

φτειάζουν ένα σπόρο. Είπε μυστήριο μεγάλο. Θαυμάζουν οι άνθρωποι τους πυραύλους· αλλά ένας σπόρος είναι πιο θαυμαστός, διότι μέσα σ' αυτόν υπάρχει η δύναμι της ζωής. Πόσο τυφλοί είμαστε και δεν βλέπουμε!

Παλαιότερα στην Αίγυπτο, εκεί που είναι οι Πυραμίδες, Άγγλοι αρχαιολόγοι έσκαψαν και βρήκαν τον τάφο ενός φαραώ. Είχε ταφή πρό τριών χιλιάδων ετών. Μέσα στον τάφο βρέθηκαν πολλά αντικείμενα, χρυσά και άσημενα περιδέραια κ.λπ. Μεταξύ των άλλων βρήκαν, μέσα σε ένα χρυσό βάζο, σπόρους σιταρι. Κάποιος αρχαιολόγος είπε: "Άραγε ο σπόρος αυτός να έχει τη δύναμι να φυτρώσει;... Πήραν από αυτόν και έσπειραν, και προς κατάπληξιν όλων ο σπόρος εκείνος φύτρωσε! Τρείς χιλιάδες χρόνια κράτησε μέσα του ζωή.

Θέλεις θαύματα, άνθρωπε; Ξέρε ένα βλέμμα γύρω σου στην θεία δημιουργία. Το κάθε τι μαρτυρεί, ότι υπάρχει Θεός, ότι εκείνος είναι «ο ποιων θαύματα μόνος» (Ψαλ. 71, 18).

● Άλλ' εκτός από τον φυσικό υπάρχει και ο υπερφυσικός σπόρος. Ποιός είναι αυτός; Είναι ο λόγος του Θεού, τα λόγια που κηρύττονται στην εκκλησία, τα λόγια του Ευαγγελίου. Θέλετε να δείτε τη δύναμι αυτού του σπόρου;

✓ Κάποτε ένας νέος 17-18 ετών, πάνω στο άνω της ηλικίας του και κληρονόμος μεγάλης περιουσίας, μπήκε στην εκκλησία. Μπήκε με πίστι, όχι αδιάφορος όπως εμείς. Ο Ιερέας διάβασε το ευαγγέλιο της ημέρας εκείνης, που έλεγε: «...Πώλησόν σου τα υπάρχοντα και δός πτωχοίς...» (Ματ. 19, 21). Όταν ο νέος άκουσε τα λόγια αυτά δεν είπε «Αυτό είναι για τους άλλους». Είπε: «Αυτός ο λόγος είναι για μένα». Και μόλις βγήκε από το ναό, πήγε στο σπίτι αποφασισμένος· πούλησε όλη την περιουσία του, τη μοίρασε στους φτωχούς της Αλεξανδρείας, και μετά έφυγε στην έρημο, όπου έζησε την υπηλότερη ζωή· διότι «τοίς έρημικοίς ζωή μακαρία έστί θεϊκῶ έρωτι πτερουμένοις» (Ψαλ. 114, 5). Έζησε εκεί 85-90 χρόνια περίπου. Τέλος παρέδωσε στο Θεό την ψυχή του, και το παράδειγμά του μένει στους αιώνες. Και αυτός είναι ο Μέγας Αντώνιος. Από ένα λόγο της Γραφής φύτρωσε το ούράνιο αυτό δέντρο.

✓ Θέλετε ένα ακόμη παράδειγμα; Κάποιος άλλος νέος είχε ζησει ζωή ακάθαρτη. Ζωηρός όπως ήταν, βούτηξε βαθειά μέσα στην άμαρτία. Μια μέρα πήγε κι αυτός στην εκκλησία, αλλά με υπεροψία και κριτική διάθεση απέναντι στα θεία και ιερά. Όταν μπήκε στο ναό άκουσε να κηρύττει από τον άμβωνα ο επίσκοπος, ένας από τους μεγάλους διδασκάλους της Εκ-

κλησίας. Ο νέος, παρά τη διαφθορά του, είχε καλή καρδιά και ο λόγος του επισκόπου έπιασε στην ψυχή του. Από τα λόγια εκείνα σιγά-σιγά άλλαξε, και τέλος έγινε πιστός και ένας από τους μεγαλύτερους πατέρες της Εκκλησίας. Και στην περίπτωση αυτή από τα λόγια του Ευαγγελίου φύτρωσε ένα ούράνιο δέντρο, που ονομάζεται **Άγιος Αύγουστίνος**, αυτός του οποίου κ' εγώ αναξίως φέρω το όνομα.

Και πολλά άλλα σημερινά παραδείγματα δείχνουν, ότι ο λόγος του Θεού εξακολουθεί να φέρνει κοσμογονία σε έκλεκτες ψυχές.

Αυτό το λόγο, αυτό το σπόρο, σπέρνουμε κ' εμείς. Δεν έχουμε άλλο όπλο. Είναι ο λόγος που έσπειρε ο Χριστός, ο λόγος που έσπειρε ο απόστολος Παύλος, ο λόγος που έσπειρε ο Μέγας Βασίλειος και ο Ιερός Χρυσόστομος, ο λόγος που κήρυξαν οι πατέρες και της Έβδόμης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου, των οποίων τη μνήμη εορτάζουμε σήμερα. Αυτό το λόγο θα κηρύττουμε, με την ακράδαντη πίστι, ότι αυτός θα νικήσει στο τέλος. Υπάρχουν ασφαλώς κ' εκείνοι που, και ο Χριστός να κατέβαινε πάλι στη γη, δεν θα τον άκουγαν· πάντοτε όμως θα υπάρχει και η αγαθή γη.

Πρίν τελειώσω, θέλω να στραφώ κυρίως προς τους νέους μας, που αποτελούν την αύριανή ελπίδα, για να τους πω τα εξής.

Έξω από το Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών υπάρχουν δύο αγάλματα. Το ένα είναι του Γρηγορίου του Ε' πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, που απαγχόνισαν οι Τούρκοι στην πύλη του πατριαρχείου και το αίμα της θυσίας του έγινε σπόρος για να βλαστήσει η έλευθερία μας. Το άλλο είναι του Ήγη Φεραίου, που με τα κηρύγματα, τις προκηρύξεις και τα θούριά του έσπειρε σπόρο λευτεριάς. Πολλές φορές τα παιδιά της Ελλάδος, κ' εγώ ως φοιτητής και μεγάλος άκομα, βλέποντας το άγαλμα αυτό σταθήκαμε και διαβάσαμε από κάτω: «Έσπειρες άρκετό σπόρο, και ο σπόρος σου θα φυτρώσει». Από τον σπόρο αυτών των δύο βλάστησε η έθνική μας έλευθερία.

Χρόνια κ' εγώ σπέρνω το λόγο του Θεού σε χωριά και πολιτείες. Δεν κουράστηκα, διότι γνωρίζω, ότι ο σπόρος αυτός κάποτε θα δώσει γλυκείς καρπούς. Τον σπόρο αυτόν θα εξακολουθήσω να σπέρνω με τη βοήθεια του Κυρίου και τις προσευχές όλων σας, και πιστεύω ότι αυτός τελικώς θα νικήσει, προς δόξαν και λατρείαν του Χριστού, προς έπαινον της πατρίδος, και προς εύλογίαν των Χριστιανών.

(†) **Επίσκοπος Αύγουστίνος**

The Lord gives us once again an opportunity to express our solidarity by becoming a supporting and registered member of the parish. We can only urge you to do so because your sustaining membership keeps this parish functioning and responding to the needs of all the faithful. Don't wait until some insignificant date on the calendar. Register with the Church Office **TODAY** and garner all the benefits of being a supporter of Christ's mission on earth.

FAMILY REGISTRATION FOR HUSBAND & WIFE: \$300 PER YEAR

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP: \$250 PER YEAR

SENIOR CITIZEN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP \$200 PER YEAR

SENIOR CITIZEN HUSBAND & WIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$225 PER YEAR

WE DO NEED YOUR HELP!

Registering with your local parish is not so much a duty or obligation as it is a **PRIVILEGE**. By registering and offering your annual stewardship, you become an integral member of the living body of Christ as a faith community. By virtue of your Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), and Holy Eucharist (Communion), you claim to be a follower of Christ, a witness for Christ, and a practitioner for Christ. May we ask you then to live up to these promises by making your 2023 commitment **TODAY!** The benefits you shall receive beyond grace include the satisfaction and knowledge that this Church and community thrive thanks to your outreach.

A Word of Warning

Store up in your minds the Lord's words which you receive through your ears, for the word of the Lord is the nourishment of the mind. When His word is heard but not stored away in the memory, it is like food which has been eaten and then rejected by an upset stomach. A person's life is despaired of if he cannot retain his food. So if you receive the food of holy exhortations, but fail to store in your memory those words of life which nurture righteousness, you have good reason to fear the danger of everlasting death. Be careful, then, that the word you have received through your ears remains in your heart. Be careful that the seed does not fall along the path, for fear that the evil spirit may come and take it from your memory. Be careful that the seed is not received in stony ground, so that it produces a harvest of good works without the roots of perseverance. Many people are pleased with what they hear and resolve to undertake some good work, but as soon as difficulties begin to arise and hinder them they leave the work

unfinished. The stony ground lacked the necessary moisture for the sprouting seed to yield the fruit of perseverance.

Good earth, on the other hand, brings forth fruit by patience. The reason for this is that nothing we do is good unless we also bear with equanimity the injuries done us by our neighbors. In fact, the more we progress, the more hardships we shall have to endure in this world; for when our love for the present world dies, its sufferings increase. This is why we see many people doing good works and at the same time struggling under a heavy burden of afflictions. They now shun earthly desires, and yet they are tormented by greater sufferings. But, as the Lord said, they bring forth fruit by patience, because, since they humbly endure misfortunes, they are welcomed when these are over into a place of rest in heaven.

St. Gregory the Great

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